

BEFORE THE ELECTRICITY OMBUDSMAN (MUMBAI)

(Appointed by the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission
under Section 42(6) of the Electricity Act, 2003)

REPRESENTATION NO. 03 OF 2022

In the matter of frequent interruptions of supply

Ashutosh Kailashnath Nanda Appellant

V/s.

Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd., Bund Garden, Pune..... Respondent
(MSEDCL)

Appearances:

For Appellant : 1. Ashutosh Kailashnath Nanda
2. Gautam Idnani, Representative

For Respondent : B. M. Sawant, Executive Engineer, Bundgarden Dn.


Coram: Deepak Lad

Date of hearing: 10th February 2022

Date of Order : 23rd February 2022

ORDER

This Representation is filed on 17th January 2022 under Regulation 19.1 of the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum and Electricity Ombudsman) Regulations, 2020 (CGRF Regulations 2020) against the Order dated 11th November 2021 passed by the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, MSEDCL, Pune Zone (the Forum).


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2. The Forum, by its order dated 11.11.2021 has allowed the grievance application in Case No.14 of 2021 with directions as under: -

“2. The Respondent / Officers of the MSEDCL shall be more sensitive, sensible and accountable as agreed by them in their reply dt.27.05.2021 and the meeting dt.04.11.2020 in respect of outages, interruptions and breakdown.

3. Copy of judgment be circulated to all Sub-divisions in Pune Zone to make them aware as observed para No.16.”


3. Aggrieved by the order dated 11.11.2021 of the Forum, the Appellant has filed this Representation which is stated in brief as under: -

- (i) The Appellant resides at Flat No.801, Adimaa Apartments, Boat Club Road, Bund Garden, Sangamwadi, Pune. The Appellant is having residential connection (No.160018812492) under Wadia Subdivision of the Respondent. The Appellant and many other residents of Boat Club Road continue to face daily power outages / interruptions without any prior SMS notice nor any information / explanation.
- (ii) Koregaon Park Mohalla Sudhar Samiti (the Samiti) is a social organization for the welfare and other activities in their area. The Appellant is a member of the Samiti who has filed this Representation. This Samiti by its letter dated 23.10.2020 had put up their complaint of power supply interruptions faced by the members of Boat Club area to the Chief Engineer of the Respondent and Others. The main issues highlighted in letter are as below:
 - (a) Most of the time, the members do not get any sort of intimation through System Driven SMS System. It is beyond understanding of the Appellant that whether the System is functioning properly or otherwise. In addition, there were no information on local MSEDCL WhatsApp Group for scheduled and/or unscheduled power outages.
 - (b) The outdated and unsecured equipment in the system possess a great threat to life and property.


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- (c) Information / transparency was not maintained by the Respondent regarding planned and forced power supply outages.
- (d) There are frequent breakdown / power outages and voltage fluctuations damaging gadgets and equipment.
- (e) Queries / complaints of consumers are not responded satisfactorily by local MSEDCL authority.
- (iii) The Respondent held a meeting with the members of the Samiti on 04.11.2020 in the office of Executive Engineer, Bund Garden, Pune. The Respondent assured to take due cognizance in the said meeting. The minutes of the meeting was circulated vide letter No.2497 dated 10.11.2020.
- (iv) In spite of assurance, the Appellant and the Samiti members, especially of Boat Club are facing daily power outages from 16.01.2021.
- (v) Hence, the Appellant and the Samiti addressed a letter dated 25.01.2021 to the Chief Engineer (CE) of the Respondent complaining about the daily power outages faced by Boat Club area. However, no response or any action was taken on the issues raised in the letter.
- (vi) The Appellant and the Samiti by letter dated 15.04.2021 approached the Forum and wanted direction to be given to the Respondent to respond to their letter dated 25.01.2021. Later, the Appellant filed the grievance with the Forum in prescribed format on 23.04.2021.
- (vii) The Forum, by its order dated 11.11.2021 has disposed the grievance and issued the order as below:
- “2. The Respondent / Officers of the MSEDCL shall be more sensitive, sensible and accountable as agreed by them in their reply dt.27.05.2021 and the meeting dt.04.11.2020 in respect of outages, interruptions and breakdown.*
- 3. Copy of judgment be circulated to all Sub-divisions in Pune Zone to make them aware as observed para No.16.”*
- (viii) The Appellant approached the office of the Electricity Ombudsman, Mumbai by letter dated 04.01.2022, and in prescribed Schedule B format on 17.01.2022.


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- (ix) The Appellant along with other members of the Samiti, by letter dated 04.01.2022 has raised various issues with respect to frequent power supply interruptions, lack of transparency and absence of communication with the complainants. The Forum, in its order, has discussed all these issues and tried to give message to sensitize the officers of the Respondent. However, the Forum, in its concluding part of the order, has not specifically issued any directions as such, which otherwise would have been binding on the Respondent for compliance. This would have further enabled the Respondent to improve the state of affairs.
- (x) It was expected that the Forum would direct the Senior Officers of the Respondent to take a serious call on frequent interruptions, unscheduled outages, and reasons for interruptions, corrective measures taken by the lower rank and file officers of the Respondent, renovation and modernization of the system, if required. It was also pointed out that the Respondent does not maintain record of interruptions of less than 30 minutes. This, therefore, does not automatically prompt the Senior Management to take a call on the issue unless specifically brought to their notice. However, nothing sort of this came out of the order. Hence, the Representation is filed seeking directions to the Respondent.

4. The Respondent filed its reply dated 28.01.2022 stating in brief as under: -

- (i) The Appellant vide his complaint dated 15.04.2021 addressed to the Forum, has mentioned 3 Consumer Nos. 170016786023, 160018812492 and 170015514771 of Boat Club area and complained about frequent interruptions without any prior intimation/notice. The Appellant, ultimately, requested a reply to their letter dated 25.01.2021. The reply is as below:

The frequent interruptions noted by the Appellant as per the Samiti's letter dated 25.01.2021 and its clarification is as under: -


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S. No.	Time of outage as mentioned in Consumer letter			Detail of interruptions as per MSEDCL record			Remark
	Date	From (Hrs)	To (Hrs)	Feeder Name	From (Hrs)	To (Hrs)	
1	16.01.2021	08.32	08.43	22 KV Naidu-1 feeder faulty declared from khadki Substation	08.40	08.47	Due to breakdown, the load is diverted on another incomer feeder. Hence interruption of 7 mins.
2	16.01.2021	13.12	16.05	11 KV Boat Club Feeder	14.13	16.04	The 11 KV cable found faulty. Hence same are removed and all other loads made normal at 16.04 hrs.
3	16.01.2021	17.17	17.50	11 KV boat club feeder	17.31	17.50	Trial taken on removed cable but found again faulty. Hence again removed and other load made normal.
4	16.01.2021	18.21	18.33	11 KV boat club feeder	18.21	18.33	For cable connection which were removed during fault.
5	18.01.2021	13.09	13.32	11 KV boat club feeder with 11 KV incomer...	13.09	13.31	Flashover in Jagannath Society Feeder Pillar Box..... cleaned and restored.
6	20.01.2021	16.42	16.52	11 KV boat club feeder	16.42	16.50	1 piece of 11 KV cable was provisionally laid over ground on 16.01.2021 for restoring the supply urgently. The same cable piece is made underground 20.1.2021. For this work, shut down taken for cable removal.
7	20.01.2021	17.50	18.01	11 KV boat club feeder	17.50	18.00	For reconnecting above cable after work completion, shut down taken.

Total interruptions including transient interruptions are registered in logbook which is maintained in the substation and the daily log sheet of the substation of above 3 dates are put on record. As per request, in the letter, the details of interruptions of all feeders in 3 sections of the Bund Garden Subdivision are also brought on record.

- (ii) It is submitted that timely maintenance is being carried out to minimize the interruptions. The details of the outages being taken are fed to System in advance and



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outages are availed only after approval from the System / Manual Approval from the Competent Authority. The breakdown, if occurred, is being fed to system by the Section Office with tentative time required for restoration. Considering the above complaints, the Respondent assured that all appropriate measures of preventive maintenance will be taken to minimise interruptions of power supply. It will inform in advance, in case of shut down proposed for preventive maintenance through messages to the concerned consumers about supply interruptions. In case of breakdown, intimation thereof will be given to concerned consumers about tentative time required for restoration.

- (iii) As per the directives of the Forum, its order has been circulated up to the section level for taking corrective steps.
- (iv) The Respondent prays that the Representation be disposed of accordingly.

5. The hearing was held on 10.02.2022 on e-platform through video conferencing due to the Covid-19 Epidemic. The Appellant specifically argued on the points raised by him in his letter dated 04.01.2022. The overall tone of the argument from the Appellant side was of conciliation and towards improvement of the system in general for better services to consumers at large. During the argument, the Appellant pointed out that the Respondent did convey messages through a local WhatsApp group about interruptions / restorations / etc. However, he was insisting on development of its system which will drive SMS to be sent to all concerned consumers about interruptions and probable time for restoration, etc. It was also argued that the Respondent does not maintain log of shorter duration interruptions of less than 30 minutes in the System developed by it. This prevents the Senior Management to take appropriate action on the issues involved. It was pointed out that the Respondent has also not come out openly on steps taken to improve the quality and reliability of power supply. It agreed that there may be certain administrative / financial constraints on the Respondent's side to put the things in place but simultaneously, there needs to be some concrete efforts to fix some time frame so that the renovation / modernization,


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maintenance activities, major revamping required, if any, can be planned, approved, and executed. However, due to lack of transparency on the part of the Respondent, the Appellant was unable to understand the ground realities and continued to suffer at the hands of the Respondent.

6. The Respondent, on the other hand, argued that it has started taking note of small duration tripping also, in its logbook at the substation. Planned outages are informed in advance through system generated SMS to consumers on their mobile phones which are registered with it. Almost 90% consumers have registered their mobile numbers with the Respondent. It further added that the incoming feeder of the Substation is 13 km long and passes through forest and military area which requires specific permission for chopping of tree branches in the vicinity of the overhead line. Sometimes it becomes difficult to get the permission in time which results in interruptions. Moreover, it has undertaken maintenance of feeder pillars where possibility of catching moisture at the live wire contacts is very high. It has also issued work orders to the approved agencies on panel for various maintenance work. This has reduced the interruptions substantially.

7. During the hearing, the undersigned directed the Respondent to submit following information:

- a) For the period from January 2021 to January 2022 month wise, number of interruptions of duration less than 30 minutes, and transient interruptions where supply is immediately restored.
- b) For the period from January 2021 to January 2022 month wise, number of interruptions of duration more than 30 minutes.
- c) For the period from January 2021 to January 2022 month wise, number of planned and forced outages.
- d) What is the month wise maintenance work carried out during the above period?
- e) Details of any major R&M Scheme, if proposed for the area, to improve the system in general.

The above information was directed to be submitted within 10 days.


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8. The Respondent vide its email dated 16.02.2022 has submitted the said information. The important Statistical Data is tabulated in brief which is captured from its submission.

Table 1: -

Planned and Forced Outages during Jan-21 to Jan-22			
Name of Feeder	Planned Outages	Forced Outages	Total Outages (Planned + Forced)
	Nos.	Nos.	Nos.
11 KV Boat Club	4	2	6
11 KV Wadia	5	1	6
11 KV RBM	3	2	5
11 KV Brahma Bajaj	2	2	4
11 KV Vidhut Nagar	3	8	11
Total	17	15	32

Table 2: -

Name of Feeder	Tripping below 30 Minutes				Tripping above 30 Minutes			
	Jan-21	Jan-22	Total Tripping: Jan-21 to Jan-22	Average Tripping per month	Jan-21	Jan-22	Total Tripping: Jan-21 to Jan-22	Average Tripping per month
11 KV Boat Club	24	7	190	15	1	0	18	2
11 KV Wadia	8	3	176	14	0	1	22	2
11 KV RBM	7	3	133	10	0	0	19	1
11 KV Brahma Bajaj	7	2	132	10	3	0	17	1
11 KV Vidhut Nagar	8	4	153	12	1	1	17	1
Total	54	19	784	60	5	2	93	7



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Table 3: -

Interruption below 30 Minutes during Jan-21 to Jan-22					
Name of Feeder	0-5 Min	5-10 Min	10-20 Min	20-30 Min	Total 0 to 30 Min
11 KV Boat Club	101	51	29	9	190
11 KV Wadia	99	53	15	9	176
11 KV RBM	81	40	10	2	133
11 KV Brahma Bajaj	80	36	11	5	132
11 KV Vidhut Nagar	89	35	25	4	153
Total	450	215	90	29	784

Table 4: -

Interruptions below 30 Minutes during Jan-21 to Jan-22					
Name of Feeder	Total Interruptions below 30 Minutes	Transient Tripping which is restored immediately		Other Interruptions which was attended manually	
	Nos.	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
11 KV Boat Club	190	85	45%	105	55%
11 KV Wadia	176	79	45%	97	55%
11 KV RBM	133	65	49%	68	51%
11 KV Brahma Bajaj	132	69	52%	63	48%
11 KV Vidhut Nagar	153	54	35%	99	65%
Total	784	352	45%	432	55%

The Respondent stated that during planned outages, the routine preventive maintenance of overhead and underground lines were carried out which includes cutting of adjacent tree branches which were likely to touch the live parts of overhead lines, routine checking and tightening of jumpers at cut point of overhead lines, replacing of broken insulators, connection tightening, renewal of insulation tapes at cable joints in feeder pillars of underground lines, renewal of suspected defective joint kits, arranging proper shutters to feeder pillars to avoid moisture accumulation inside etc.

The Respondent has also put on record the various maintenance carried out on 22 /11 kV Substation, 22 kV lines, 11 kV Lines and Distribution Transformers etc. The Respondent has taken


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due care to look, into the issue of tripping, not only, in the area, of the Appellant but in the total area supplied by the 22 / 11 kV substation. The process is continuous, and all out efforts are being taken to improve the position.

Analysis and Ruling

9. Heard the parties and perused the documents on record. It is an admitted position that the Appellant did suffer from numerous interruptions in power supply. The Appellant appears to be annoyed with small duration interruptions which are obviously not conveyed to him. It is also the contention of the Appellant that if the system is suffering from so many interruptions for the genuine reasons, then there ought to be some system which takes care of corrective action, such as analysis of the issue, renovation and modernization of the system, preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) towards system improvement, and administrative & financial approval thereof, finally culminating into execution of the DPR and reliable and quality power supply to the consumers at large. However, the Appellant feel that this does not appear to have been done by the Respondent as the Respondent did not think it fit to take suffering consumers into confidence and part with the action plan, it might have thought of. This is the expectation from the utility which is in the Service Industry.

10. Though I find some corrective action on the part of the Respondent, but I believe this alone will not resolve the issue as the feeding feeder to the substation is 13 km long which passes through forest and military area. The Respondent need to examine the available capacity of the source substation which feeds the 22 / 11 kV Naidu Substation, current carrying capacity of the source feeder, current carrying capacity of all the feeders emanating from Naidu Substation, 11 kV Ring feeding if possible, and host of other things, Respondent is well aware of. However, no such exercise taken, if any, appears to have been put on record by the Respondent.



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11. I am, therefore, of the opinion that the matter needs to be seriously looked into by the Superintending Engineer of the area, and he needs to apprise the Chief Engineer of Pune Zone of the Respondent.

12. I, therefore, direct the secretariat of this office to send a copy of this order to the concerned Superintending Engineer, and the Chief Engineer of Pune Zone who are directed to take a call on the factual positions considering the points brought out above, by the undersigned. This exercise needs to be carried out within a span of three months. The Respondent is directed to convey the Appellant at the end of three months, possibly through a meeting.

Sd/-
(Deepak Lad)
Electricity Ombudsman (Mumbai)


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